

EXHIBIT

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Al-Hayah Reports 'Dismissal' of Saudi Al-Haramayn Charity Director General

GMP200401080001B5 London Al-Hayah in Arabic 08 Jan 04 pp 1,6

[Unattributed report from Riyadh: "Head of Al-Haramayn Charity Foundation Dismissed."]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Well-informed sources have confirmed to Al-Hayah the dismissal of the director general of the Al-Haramayn Charity Foundation, Shaykh Aqil al-Aqil, from the post he held since the foundation's establishment 13 years ago.

The sources said that Shaykh Sâlib Bin-Abd-al-Aziz Al-Al-Shaykh, the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs, Religious Endowments, Propagation, and Guidance, who is chairman of the foundation's board of directors, has issued a decision charging Shaykh Dabbas Bin-Muhammad al-Dabbasi, assistant director general for propagation and relief affairs, with administering the foundation's business.

Al-Hayah tried to contact Shaykh Al-Aqil to find out the reasons for his removal, but he declined on the pretext he is too busy to talk.

Sources have said that Al-Aqil has in fact left the foundation and that he no longer holds any official capacity in it.

It was said that among the reasons for Al-Aqil's removal is his "absolute centralization."

Top officials at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs refused to say that the decision to dismiss Al-Aqil was issued by the chairman of the foundation's board of directors, but they declined to give any further details.

Sources close to Al-Aqil said the removal took place on the basis of an understanding between Al-Aqil and the minister, Al-Al-Shaykh, on "injecting new young blood in the foundation." The sources confirmed that it was the minister "who issued the dismissal decision."

In the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks the Al-Haramayn Charity Foundation became the target of accusations of financing terrorist actions and supporting outlaw groups. The victims of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York have asked for compensation from the Al-Haramayn foundation as well as from other Islamic charities. As a result of those accusations, the foundation closed down 10 of its offices in various parts of the world, the most important of which was its office in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The foundation focuses its activity on building Islamic centers and mosques, supporting

propagators' institutes, sponsoring orphans, financing courses in teaching the Koran and Islamic canon law, and helping sick people who are in need.

[Description of Source: London Al-Hayah in Arabic.—Influential Saudi-owned London daily providing independent coverage of Arab and international issues; commentaries occasionally critical of US policy.]

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